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## ON THE REVIEWER'S TABLE

### "Germany and the Germans: From an American Point of View."

By Price Collier, Charles Scribner's Sons, through Bell Book and Stationery Company, \$1.50 net.

In the preparation of his latest nation study, Mr. Collier brings not only a brilliant mind equipped with the trained powers of close observation, which made his "England and the English" so noteworthy a book, but also a rarely sympathetic insight into the subject acquired during the years of his sojourn in Germany as a student. The one qualification enables him to view the German empire and its many peoples with the detachment of the professional critic, the other lends that remoteness by the bond of personal feeling necessarily created by the friendship of youthful days.

The result of this unusual combination in a critical student of nations is an invaluable book, since it views the subject both from the outside and from the inside.

In his introduction, the author says: "On more than one occasion of late I have been introduced in places, and to persons, where a slight picture of what I was to meet when the doors were thrown open was of great help to me. I was told beforehand something of the history, traditions, the forms and ceremonies, and even something of the weaknesses and attributes of the society, the persons and the personages. I am not so wise as some of my sponsors have been, but it is something of the kind that I have

wished and planned to do for my countrymen. I have tried to make this a book, not a guidebook, certainly not a history; rather, in the words of Bacon, 'grains of salt, which will rather give an appetite than offend with satiety.' A sketch, in short, of what is on the other side of the great doors when the announcer speaks your name and you enter Germany."

And he immediately begins to carry out his plan. Throughout the first chapter, "The Cradle of Modern Germany," he briefly relates the history of those tribes that now form Germany and the Germans, being careful always to bring forward and to accentuate those features of their government and habits of life that tend to substantiate his earlier statement that "The framework of our republicanism came from the 'Woods of Germany.'"

Following this running, almost breathless recital of historical facts, halting occasionally, accompanied always, by an equally rapid commentary upon the events recounted and their effect upon the communities of that day, and hence upon the civilization of to-day, Mr. Collier proceeds in the next chapter to trace the trend of events in Germanic Europe from "Friedrich the Great to Bismarck," during which it begins to be apparent that a nation is a-borning. Up to the point of the foundation of the empire, the innumerable conflicts among the 300 sovereigns who ruled over what is now Germany, towered over by the

Hohenzollern Kings of Prussia, who some twenty odd generations before had been merely Margraves or Markgraves of Brandenburg.

Suddenly, that "man of blood and iron," Bismarck, looms heavily into view, stern, ruthless, indomitable; the real unification of Germany begins, for, says Mr. Collier, "The history of German unity is the biography of Bismarck," and we are then taken to the Hall of the Mirrors in the Palace at Versailles.

Then the author opens the door, and we are ushered into the German Empire, the Germany of which he writes with such intimacy of detail as may be crowded into some 600 pages.

Immediately we become confused. We have been told that "Out of this furnace came a constitutional government in England, and republican government in America. We owe the origins of our political life to the influence of these German tribes, with their love of individual freedom and their stern hatred of middle-class rule, or a middle-class state or legislature."

Now we learn that "there is no such thing in Germany as democratic or representative government," and, further, that "what can be done and what is done in Germany has been done bearing upon what can be done in America or in England. All analogies are false, all illustrations futile, all examples valueless, for the one reason that the empire of Germany is governed by one man, who declares his independence of the people and admits his responsibility to God alone."

There naturally follows the picture of William II, and a pleasing picture it is, Mr. Collier draws it.

He fully sets out the autocratic power of the Emperor. "To write about Germany without writing about the Emperor is as impossible as to jump away from one's own shadow. When the sun is behind any phase or department of German life, the shadow is that of Germany's Emperor. He so pervades German life that to write of the Germany of the last twenty-five years without attempting to describe William the Second, German Emperor, would be to leave every question, institution and problem of the country without its master-key."

The Emperor has repeatedly announced his belief in his divine right to reign, but that belief is not to be taken at its face value. Collier implies in him an equally certain belief that it is his duty to the Divinity to reign, and to reign wisely and well. The author explains the apparent inconsistency in the attitudes of the man who claims and exercises autocratic power and at the same time declares himself to be the first servant of the people by his plausible interpretation of his meaning to be that he is the servant of his nation's destiny.

And here it must be admitted that some of us who are in no sense monarchists or upholders of the divine right doctrine are undemocratic enough, or rather undemocratic enough, to believe that the public servant who follows what his intelligence teaches him is his obligation to the people rather than what popular clamor declares to be the will of the people, is, after all, possibly the servant who renders service as opposed to servitude.

Of the Emperor's versatility, Mr. Collier writes with enthusiasm, concluding a partial list of his accomplishments and of his specializations in knowledge with the exulting exclamation, "He even knows what he believes about woman's suffrage, and about God, a rare consciousness of thinking in these troublous times."

As to the war-like side of William the Second, Mr. Collier explains his personal sympathy with the stiffening of Germany's martial backbone by a bit of philosophizing that

is this all-pervading, all-powerful person and personality of the Emperor that Americans find it hard to understand, and only the perusal of such a book as Mr. Collier's can make it clear. The three-class system of suffrage, the complete centralization of power for even the authorities of the wonderfully governed cities of Prussia may be removed by the Emperor for cause, and the cause may be merely his imperial whim—the immense weight of a uniform bureaucracy, and the curious character of the Reichstag, a law-making body dissoluble at the will of the Emperor, all these must be understood before one can realize the monarchy that is the German Empire.

Even the parties of the Right, the Centre and the Left, including the Socialists, of whom we hear so much and so little that is good, are, according to the author, fabby at best. "The parties themselves are not real, since thousands of voters lean to the left merely to express their discontent; but they would desert the Social Democrats at once did they think there was a chance of real governing power for them. A small industrial was warned of the danger of that would happen did the Socialists come into power. 'Ah,' he replied, 'but the government would not permit that!'" A profound commentary in a joke!

Fortunately for the Germans at home, and Mr. Collier, they want to be governed, for governed they certainly are. The most minutely, indomitably governed people on earth, and the press, so powerful in other countries, helps them or hinders them not at all. Indeed, the chapter devoted to the Fourth Estate in Germany is simply a shimmering, highly-spiced "roast," with the exception of a few paragraphs devoted to Maximilian Harden and his "Zukunft."

Although Germany is governed and policed to a degree incredible in this country, it is intellectually a republic, says Mr. Collier, and we Americans have beyond all other peoples profited by her literature, her philosophy, her music and her scientific and economic teaching. Possibly this intellectual freedom, together with her youthfulness as a nation, he thinks, is responsible for the flood of "nasty literature" that is now sweeping over her, just as it may be held accountable for the inconceivable immorality of Berlin and the tremendous percentage of cases "without benefit of clergy" throughout the Empire.

So, too, it may be because of the intellectuality of this freedom that there is no free and stalwart opposition to the Government. "The German imagines," opines the author, "that he has done something when he has an idea; just as the Frenchman imagines that he has done something when he has made an epigram."

The professor, the teachers, he finds, are superlatively good, but the people are over-educated; the men are poets, dreamers and muselians, but the women are looked upon by them as mothers, cooks and darning of socks; their streets are amazingly clean, but their municipal statues are monstrous; the Germans are coddled, "grandmothered," and pensioned, but one in every twelve persons living in Germany has been convicted of some offense, not because he is a criminal, but because he has in some way violated a "Verboten" sign; Germans love the Fatherland, but when they take up their abode in other countries they

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may have its basis in truth—who knows? He says: "When shall we all recover a certain international sickness that keeps us all feverish? The continual talk and writing about international friendships, being of the same family, or the same race, the cousin propaganda in short, is irritating, not helpful. . . . We have been sufficed with pseudo peace, with the irritable one hundredth part of an ounce of the same quality of peace powder that we are using internationally would, if prescribed to a happy family in this or any other land, lead to dissensions, divorces, domestic disasters and divorces. Mr. Carnegie will have lived long enough to see more wars and international disturbances, and more discontent born of superficial reading, than any man in history who was at the same time so closely connected with the war."

But, he writes in another connection, "we shall have war when the German Kaiser touches a button and gives an order, and the German people will have no more to say in the matter than you and I."

It is this all-pervading, all-powerful person and personality of the Emperor that Americans find it hard to understand, and only the perusal of such a book as Mr. Collier's can make it clear. The three-class system of suffrage, the complete centralization of power for even the authorities of the wonderfully governed cities of Prussia may be removed by the Emperor for cause, and the cause may be merely his imperial whim—the immense weight of a uniform bureaucracy, and the curious character of the Reichstag, a law-making body dissoluble at the will of the Emperor, all these must be understood before one can realize the monarchy that is the German Empire.

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become naturalized citizens of those countries; they deal with inanimate objects as masters of science and skill, but bungle in all their dealings with men.

In all the other chapters of his book, seriously or wittily entitled "The Indiscreet" (the Kaiser), "German Political Parties and the Press," "Berlin," "A Land of Damned Professors," "The Distasteful Side," "Ohnee Arme kein Deutschland," "German Problems" and "From Envy, Hatred and Malice," and in his Conclusion, Mr. Collier's discursive and agreeable remarks upon the subjects of duels, diet, literature, political lethargy, enslaving social socialism, art, music and the musical glasses in general, whenever the subject sounded strikes their note of vibration, are always interesting, generally illuminating, and his deeper studies of Germany's mighty army, its school system, and its perplexing problems are instructive to a high degree, even though some of the apparent inconsistencies of statement are occasionally confusing.

But, after all, after a careful reading of "Germany and the Germans," the State, the Confederation, the Empire and its people seem shadowed, dwarfed, by the German Emperor, the Kaiser and

King, William the Second, who stands forth, helmeted and sworded, a very kingly figure, as Modern Germany.

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